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Modalities of Civil–Military Stability in Africa

by SAMUEL DECALO*

IF during the 1960s the *coup d'état* emerged as the most visible and recurrent characteristic of the African political experience, by the 1980s quasi-permanent military rule, of whatever ideological hue, had become the norm for much of the continent. At any moment in time, up to 65 per cent of all Africa's inhabitants and well over half its states are governed by military administrators. Civilian rule is but a distant memory in some countries. Few at some stage or another have not been run by an armed-forces junta, and fewer still have not been rocked at least once by an attempted coup, putsch, or military-sponsored plot. According to one tabulation, 'only six states have *not* witnessed some form of extra-legal armed involvement in national politics since 1958'.[1] The phenomenon has even reached the non-state Homelands of Bophuthatswana, Transkei, and Ciskei in South Africa. Rule by civilians is very much the statistical 'deviation' from the continental norm, as military leaders lay a permanent claim to the political throne in much of Africa.

Stability and instability are extremities of a continuum. Hence the voluminous literature that has accumulated on coups could be expected to be relevant to any assessment of the conditions that avert military upheavals in Africa. This, however, is *not* really so. Much of the theorising about sources of coup-behaviour remains riveted to the alleged rôle played by socio-economic factors, paying scant attention to intra– or civil–military policies and variables that are the crux of the matter.[2]

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[1] See Dov Ronen (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism in Africa* (Boulder and Sevenoaks, 1986), p. 134.
[2] Robert Jackman, 'The Predictability of Coups d'État. A Model with African Data', in *The American Political Science Review* (Washington, D.C.), 72, 4, September 1978, pp. 1262–75, and Thomas H. Johnson, Robert O. Slater, and Pat McGowan, 'Explaining African Military Coups d'État, 1960–1982', in ibid. 78, 3, September 1984, pp. 622–40. See the insightful criticism of the latter research and its oversights by David Goldsworthy, 'On the Structural Explanation of

At the same time, the high incidence of military régimes, coups, attempted takeovers, and civil–military strife in Africa, deflects attention from the fact that a number of states have proved remarkably immune to the coup epidemic for three decades of independent statehood. Africa contains not only acutely unstable but also ultra-stable civilian polities. The latter – whether somewhat loosely delineated to include only states that have warded off military intervention, or more rigidly restricted to encompass those without serious civil–military friction – appear at first sight to have no internal commonalities. Whether more or less developed/underdeveloped, economically weak or strong, arch-authoritarian, autocratic, or relatively 'open', a bewildering array of régimes have clearly succeeded in binding their armed forces to the concept of the political supremacy of civilian rule – or at least have deflected military ambitions elsewhere with the same end-result.

It is quite possible, of course, that some of the current stable civilian régimes may yet stumble at their first serious hurdle, the crisis of political succession, which one-third have not yet faced.[3] Conventional wisdom has often been found wanting when a 'stable' system of government and administration has collapsed like a pack of cards after the passing of the *ancien régime*, suggesting that whatever the glue binding the military to civilian rule, it had a fixed, temporal, personalist, and non-transferable dimension. Paragons of civilian longevity in office, such as Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia and Sékou Touré in Guinea, have collapsed at the succession juncture, revealing their very rubbery legs. Colin Legum's gloomy assessment may well be true that 'All African regimes are essentially temporary, or transitional, since with very few exceptions they do not operate within an established framework of viable and widely based institutions, even when they have been legitimatized.'[4]

As may be seen from Table 1, of the 15 longest-tenured civilian Heads of State, six remain in office after 20 years or more; of the other nine, three resigned voluntarily (including Ahmadu Ahidjo, who attempted a comeback), three were overthrown by a *coup d'état*, and three died in office. A number of military leaders are similarly piling up

African Military Interventions', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (Cambridge), 24, 1, March 1986, pp. 179–85. Another critical review of the uncritical application of aggregate-data analysis is to be found in John Ravenhill, 'Comparing Régime Performance in Africa: the limitations of cross-national aggregate analysis', in ibid. 18, 1, March 1980, pp. 99–126.

[3] See Arnold Hughes and Roy May, 'The Politics of Succession in Black Africa', in *Third World Quarterly* (London), 10, 1, January 1988, pp. 1–22.

[4] Colin Legum et al., *Africa in the 1980s: a continent in crisis* (New York, 1979), p. 25.

TABLE 1

Tenure of African Civilian Heads of State

Country	Name	Years	Termination	Continuation
Tunisia	Habib Bourguiba	31	Ousted by coup	
Côte d'Ivoire	Félix Houphouët-Boigny	29		Still in office
Morocco	King Hassan II	28		Still in office
Liberia	William Tubman	28	Died in office	
Guinea	Sékou Touré	28	Died in office	
Malawi	Kamuzu Banda	25		Still in office
Tanzania	Julius Nyerere	25	Voluntary retirement	
Zambia	Kenneth Kaunda	25		Still in office
The Gambia	Dawda Jawara	24		Still in office
Gabon	Omar Bongo	22		Still in office
Cameroon	Ahmadou Ahidjo	22	Voluntary retirement	
Senegal	Léopold Sédar Senghor	21	Voluntary retirement	
Lesotho	Leabua Jonathan	20	Ousted by coup	
Mauritania	Moktar Ould Daddah	18	Ousted by coup	
Swaziland	King Sobhuza II[a]	14	Died in office	

[a] It should be noted that Sobhuza II had been King of Swaziland for 47 years before independence was achieved in 1968.

record terms of office: Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaïre (24 years), Gnasingbe Eyadéma in Togo (22 years), Moussa Traoré in Mali (21 years), and Siad Barre in Somalia (19 years). In the group of 12 stable civilian régimes, listed in Table 2, it will be seen that eight have so far passed the succession threshold peacefully, including Kenya, despite an almost universal doomsday prognosis.[5]

If there is a voluminous, though sharply contradictory literature on sources of instability in Africa, there is a virtual academic void and lack of attention to the reverse condition. Indeed, only David Goldsworthy seems to have left any incisive imprints in what regretfully remains to this day the rather unexplored territory of the stable civilian régime in Africa.[6] Fifteen years ago another scholar lamented that 'explanations for political survival in independent Africa are badly catered for in the literature of political science',[7] and this criticism is certainly no less true

[5] Though see Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi, 1980).
[6] See David Goldsworthy, 'Civilian Control of the Military in Black Africa', in *African Affairs* (London), 80, 318, January 1981, pp. 49–74, and his 'Armies and Politics in Civilian Regimes', in Simon Baynham (ed.), *Military Power and Politics in Black Africa* (London, 1986), pp. 97–128.
[7] Richard Hodder-Williams, 'Dr. Banda's Malawi', in *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* (London), March 1974, p. 110.

TABLE 2

Constitutional Succession in 12 Stable Civilian Régimes

Country	Date	New Leader	Occasion
Botswana	13 July 1980	Quett Masire	Death of Sir Seretse Khama
Cameroon	6 November 1982	Paul Biya	Ahmadou Ahidjo retires
Côte d'Ivoire	—	—	—
The Gambia	—	—	—
Gabon	28 November 1967	Omar Bongo	Death of Léon Mba
Kenya	22 August 1978	Daniel arap Moi	Death of Jomo Kenyatta
Malawi	—	—	—
Mauritius	11 June 1982	Aneerod Jugnauth	Elections
Senegal	30 December 1980	Abdou Diouf	Léopold Sédar Senghor retires
Swaziland	21 August 1982	King Mswati III	Death of King Sobhuza II
Tanzania	5 November 1985	Ali Hassan Mwingi	Julius Nyerere retires
Zambia	—	—	—

today. Not a single book has addressed the generic issue of the sustaining sources of stable civilian rule in Africa, and only indirectly have a number of articles explored this dimension. As John Harbeson has remarked, 'much of the literature on the military in African politics has centered on army intervention as a departure from an implicit norm of civilian rule'[8] – even though this 'norm' now obtains in only a minority of states of Africa! On statistical grounds alone the question of how the minority of 'deviant' states have managed to avoid coups may by now be far more academically significant than why they erupt.

STABLE CIVILIAN SYSTEMS

Prior to assessing the conditions and strategies that stabilise civil–military relations in Africa, a number of preliminary qualifications are in order. First, as previously noted, the analytical focus is on the political subordination of the armed forces, and not on systemic stability that involves all kinds of régimes.

Secondly, civil–military relations are here perceived as a dynamic continuum with either extremity only theoretically possible. *Total* civilian control over all organisational, operational, strategic, and tactical deployment details of armed forces is hardly likely anywhere, least of all in weak African states, and if attempted might precipitate a

[8] John Harbeson (ed.), *The Military in African Politics* (New York, 1987), p. 2.

coup d'état. And at the other extremity of the continuum, even the harshest military régimes include *some* civilian participation in, and constraints on, their decision-making.[9]

The political subordination of the armed forces does not imply their total and mute quiescence, or their non-involvement in political matters. Conversely, as Samuel Finer reminds us, the absence of coups does not mean the absence of military influence in civilian régimes, that can range from minimal to maximal levels.[10] By being an integral part of the state, armed forces obviously have political input, clout, influence, that cannot be precluded. The most highly developed democracy will manifest a gentle but dynamic tug-of-war between the military and political establishments, with oscillations in the degree of influence wielded by each. Stable relationships allow for considerable latitude if *within* the context of unequivocal military support for civilian rule, including the acceptance of decisions reached after the normal give and take.

Finally, a *realistic* assessment of what constitutes stability is in order. Utilising overly strict criteria to define civilian supremacy could well exclude most countries in Africa! It is doubtful if more than a few have not had a single instance of serious friction between the armed forces and the government. It is here suggested that civil–military relations be also viewed as a continuum, on which the threshold of instability is breached by a *coup d'état* that ushers in a military interregnum, while stability is characterised by the latter's absence. A stable régime can thus be defined as one that despite a possible modicum of tension with the armed forces has continued to subordinate them to the political centre.

With the above qualifications in mind, the group that is currently the focus for analysis consists of those 12 African states (20 per cent of the continent) that have never had the continuity of their civilian leadership disrupted by a successful military takeover of power in at least 25 years of independence, namely: Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, The Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zambia.

A number of other states that might appear to meet the above criteria are not included. Sierra Leone, for example, is omitted because of its three coups and a spell of military rule in the 1960s, though the

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[9] See Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African personal dictatorships* (Boulder, 1989).

[10] See Samuel Finer's classic, *The Man on Horseback: the role of the military in politics* (London, 1962), pp. 77–8, as well as his equally path-breaking 'The Morphology of Military Regimes', in Roman Kolkowicz and Andrzej Korbonski (eds.), *Soldiers, Peasants and Bureaucrats* (London, 1982).

stabilisation of civilian rule since, under extremely trying socio-economic conditions, might possibly argue for its promotion to the stable group.[11] A few states of more recent vintage, such as Cape Verde, Djibouti, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, are excluded because 25 years of civilian rule have not passed since independence. Others, including Togo, notwithstanding official rhetoric to the contrary, are not civilian régimes but fundamentally different quasi-civilianised military auto-cracies.

The 12 stable civilian régimes share few commonalities, as may be seen from Table 3, beyond an absence of military interregnums.[12] The group includes both anglophone and francophone states, though the percentage of the latter under stable civilian rule has progressively been whittled down. Despite the importance of this growing variation, particularly in light of the unique modality whereby civilian rule has been stabilised in French-speaking Africa, it is not seen as statistically significant to non-empiricists, since equally high instability scores crop up in both anglophone and francophone Africa.[13]

Geographically the 12 countries are found in West Africa (4), Equatorial Africa (1), East Africa (4), and Southern Africa (3). The group includes one-party régimes, the dominant modality in Africa, as well as virtually all of the continent's multi-party states (Botswana, The Gambia, Mauritius, Senegal), and while some are basically open and/or outright democratic, others are authoritarian. However, only Tanzania has been committed to radical socio-economic change. Rhetoric aside, all the others have been unequivocally committed to capitalist development ideologies, and staunchly pro-West, some even ultra-conservative in their stances (Gabon, Malawi). This erstwhile distinction is not as significant as it might appear. Afro-Marxism tends to be a military-adopted option in Africa;[14] Tanzania apart, extremely few 'radical' states *could* appear in the stable civilian grouping, since most are military régimes or civil–military hybrids.

Nor do the 12 exhibit any major commonalities in their internal social/ethnic features that might possibly account for the marked

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[11] On the other hand, Joseph Momoh's rather unusual constitutional rise from Army Chief of Staff to President, argues for caution. Possibly Sierra Leone may better be compared and contrasted with civilianised military hybrids.

[12] Gabon's two-day military interlude in 1964 can be viewed as *sui generis*.

[13] Pat McGowan and Thomas H. Johnson, 'African Military Coups d'État and Under-development: a quantitative historical analysis', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 22, 4, December 1984, pp. 633–66.

[14] For details, see Samuel Decalo, 'The Morphology of Radical Military Rule in Africa', in *Journal of Communist Studies* (London), January 1987, pp. 122–44.

TABLE 3

Stable Civilian Régimes: Basic Indicators[a]

Country	Population mid-1982 (millions)	Area (thousands of sq. km)	G.N.P. 1982 ($)	Per capita Av. annual growth (%)	Av. annual rate of Inflation (%)		1982 Life Expectancy (years)	Food Production Index per capita av. 1980-2 (1969-71 = 100)
					1960-70	1970-82		
Botswana	0·9	600	900	6·8	2·4	11·5	60	73
Cameroon	9·3	475	890	2·6	4·2	10·7	53	102
Côte d'Ivoire	8·9	322	950	2·1	2·8	12·4	47	107
Gabon	0·7	268	4,000	4·4	5·4	19·5	49	93
The Gambia	0·7	11	360	2·5	2·2	9·7	36	74
Kenya	18·1	583	390	2·8	1·6	10·1	57	88
Malawi	6·5	118	210	2·6	2·4	9·5	44	99
Mauritius	0·9	2	1,240	2·1	2·2	15·0	66	110
Senegal	6·0	111	490	0·9	1·9	8·5	54	88
Swaziland	0·7	17	940	4·2	2·4	12·8	54	107
Tanzania	19·8	945	280	1·9	1·8	11·9	52	88
Zambia	6·0	753	640	-0·1	7·6	8·7	51	87
Africa	380·0	22,207	491	1·5	2·7	11·4	49	88

[a] Source: The World Bank, *Toward Sustained Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: a joint program of action* (Washington, D.C., 1984), Appendix, Table 1.

continuity and stability of civilian rule. A number have strikingly tranquil ethnic relations (Botswana, Swaziland), while others (The Gambia, Malawi, Tanzania) also reflect relatively calm inter-ethnic relations despite greater cultural heterogeneity. Yet the group also includes countries with rampant regionalism (e.g. Senegal, with Casamance separatism only *one* such manifestation), and sharp competitive and politicised ethnic cleavages, that in some instances (e.g. Gabon, Cameroon, Kenya) are as virulent and divisive as in countries where such animosities have contributed to the collapse of civilian rule.

In terms of economic indicators the 12 range from some of the world's poorest 25 least-developed countries (Malawi, The Gambia, Tanzania), a major anomaly for structuralist assumptions of stability, to those with some of sub-Saharan Africa's highest G.N.P. *per capita* (notably Gabon) and/or sophisticated economies (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya). Indeed, though 'middle-income' countries appear to be over-represented, as shown in Table 4, the range of national economies found in the group – weak/developed, parochial/cosmopolitan, agrarian/extractive, capital/labour intensive – is a virtual cross-section of the continent as a whole. However, when assessed in terms of *rate* of economic development, and especially success in the agrarian field, the group clearly emerges as unrepresentative of the wider community of African states, in that it includes most of the continent's economic pace-setters, and few of its laggards – at most three, and not the continental paragons, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zambia.

Finally, the question of the quality of civilian political leadership in the 12 countries. Stability of rule could well be a function of astute leadership capable of binding together fissiparous societal *and* civil–military cleavages. The case-studies present a somewhat mixed picture, again suggesting either the random causality of this variable, or that under certain conditions it is of lesser import. Corruption, for example, is thoroughly entrenched in several states (especially in Gabon, Kenya, and Zambia); grossly wasteful policies have not been absent either in others, including Côte d'Ivoire. Yet, despite these and a host of lesser 'misdemeanours', it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the leadership of the 12 stable civilian régimes includes a much higher percentage of relatively astute politicians compared to the largely lackluster performance of others on the continent.

The skills of political leadership have little to do with issues of development, socio-economic change, institutionalisation, or the structural 'determinants' pursued by some scholars as explanatory

TABLE 4

Stable Civilian Régimes: Income *per capita*[a]

Low-Income Semi-Arid	Low-Income Other	Middle-Income Oil-Importing	Middle-Income Oil-Exporting
The Gambia	Malawi Tanzania	Botswana Cameroon Côte d'Ivoire Kenya Mauritius Senegal Swaziland Zambia	Gabon

[a] Source: The World Bank, *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: an agenda for action* (Washington, D.C., 1981). The following stable régimes have been excluded due to inadequate longevity in office: Cape Verde and Djibouti (low-income semi-arid), Mozambique and Sierra Leone (low-income other), and Zimbabwe (middle-income oil-importing).

variables of stability or instability. Rather, they relate to behavioural traits of personality pure and simple: charisma, political acumen, astuteness in juggling of personal interests, capability in balancing alliances and creating networks, etcetera. Some leaders have these traits, others do not. Unfortunately neither political 'astuteness' nor 'incompetence' are easily quantifiable or measurable, and are hence ignored by many analysts. Yet, Goldsworthy puts it well when he notes that many of the stable civilian rulers are 'outstandingly able, or dominating, or even, in a few cases, popular... whereas in the great majority of the coup-prone states, these sorts of things simply cannot be said about the civilian leaders who were overthrown'.[15] Leadership, hitherto a grossly neglected variable, may well be the major independent variable in the equation, with socio-economic indicators playing a very secondary rôle. As Goldsworthy succinctly points out, 'Nyerere and Banda have managed' to keep the military subordinate 'with low national incomes; the Liberian and Congolese (Brazzaville) leaders, with considerably higher national incomes to allocate, could not'.[16]

Nor do the 12 states seem to share any similarities in the domain of military statistics that could have granted them immunity from civil–military strife – see Table 5. Countries with armies that are models of corporate professionalism, with an absence (to the degree

[15] Goldsworthy, in Baynham (ed.), op. cit. p. 117.   [16] Ibid. p. 119.

<p style="text-align:center">TABLE 5</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Stable Civilian Régimes: Basic Military Data, 1971–80[a]</p>

| Country | Armed Forces | | | Military Expenditure | |
	Total thousands	per 1,000 population	per 100 sq. miles	as % of G.N.P.	as % of national budget
Botswana	3	3·3	1·4	3·5	6·4
Cameroon	14	1·6	7·6	1·5	9·9
Côte d'Ivoire	11	1·4	8·6	1·2	3·6
Gabon	2	3·3	1·6	0·4	1·1
The Gambia	1	1·7	25·0	0·0	0·0
Kenya	16	1·0	7·1	3·8	12·9
Malawi	6	1·0	16·2	1·8	6·0
Senegal	14	2·5	18·4	2·6	11·4
Swaziland	3	5·0	44·7	2·5	6·2
Tanzania	57	3·1	15·7	5·0	16·3
Zambia	15	2·6	5·2	3·8	8·6

[a] Source: Extracted from U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1971–1980* (Washington, D.C., 1983), p. 17.

verifiable) of personalist ambitions (e.g. Botswana, Malawi, Senegal), are grouped together in the same stable category as others whose security forces are seething with intra-military tensions (e.g. Gabon). Even a cursory examination reveals that if placed on a civil–military stability continuum, the 12 would spread out very considerably across the spectrum. Though individually meeting the flexible criteria of stability adopted at the outset, the group includes states with hardly any civil–military friction, as well as those with a 'history' of tension and unrest, including seven that experienced an attempted coup. Table 6 presents their 'Total Military Involvement Scores' (T.M.I.S.): 5 points for a successful coup (none), 3 for an attempted coup, and 1 for each reported plot. All 12 are in the bottom 20 of the 45 African states in the data-base, though ranging from a 'relatively stable' Zambia in 25th rank to Botswana, Mauritius, and Swaziland, with the latter at the stable 'extremity'.

Tensions afflicting civil–military relations in the 12 have a variety of roots: corporate, personalist, systemic, as well as those lodged in the internal dynamics of the armed forces themselves. While some stable civilian régimes have indeed forged remarkably easy-going relations with the military, in which the latter unequivocally accepts sub-ordination to political authority, tensions continue to be found in many

TABLE 6

Stable Civilian Régimes: Military Involvement, 1956–84[a]

Rank	Country	T.M.I.S.	Coups	Attempted Coups	Reported Plots
25	Zambia	7	—	2	1
28	Kenya	5	—	1	2
29	Tanzania	5	—	1	2
30	Cameroon	4	—	1	1
31	The Gambia	4	—	1	1
34	Gabon	3	—	1	—
35	Côte d'Ivoire	3	—	—	3
37	Senegal	3	—	1	—
38	Malawi	1	—	—	1
40	Botswana	0	—	—	—
44	Mauritius	0	—	—	—
45	Swaziland	0	—	—	—

[a] Source: Extracted from the complete listing in McGowan and Johnson, loc. cit. p. 638. Countries omitted include those where civilian rule has recently been overthrown (e.g. Lesotho, originally ranked 43), and those that do not as yet meet the longevity criteria (e.g. Zimbabwe and Mozambique, ranked 32 and 36, respectively).

states, albeit sometimes highly anachronistic in light of the general subservient rôle of the armed forces. In addition, other indicators likewise reveal that the 12 comprise a multi-variegated group, with *political* stability ranging from high to medium.

The existence of political instability *and* ongoing friction with the military suggests that a possible further erosion of civilian rule in Africa cannot be ruled out. In Kenya, it looks as if Daniel arap Moi has been only partly successful in binding the military to his rule, despite the adoption of Jomo Kenyatta's control mechanisms, including ethnic favouritism coupled with governmental largesse. In Gabon, the societal ethnic tensions mirrored in the military are barely contained, despite being carefully monitored and rigidly controlled by Omar Bongo's expatriate officers in key posts. In Cameroon, progressive disenchantment with Paul Biya, the bloody revolt of the Ahidjo-loyalist presidential guard, and the preferential grants of patronage, have slowly exacerbated both stability and civil–military relations. In Malawi, criticisms have continued to circulate in both the army and the police about Kamuzu Banda's periodic decisions to promote the 'right' Southerners, even if this means skipping over several layers of more senior staff (especially in 1988), though in the final analysis it is the feared succession crisis that causes most alarm.

Thus empirical evidence underscores that, as a whole, the armed forces in the 12 stable civilian régimes are not necessarily free of the kinds of internal cleavages, competitions, and personalist grievances that trigger coups in their less stable neighbours. However, in the majority of instances, existing tensions have not precipitated armed interventions, and those that have taken place have been quelled with relative ease.

The fact that many states experience a degree of both political instability and military tension, without abnormally high levels of T.M.I.S., suggests two things. First, that the quality of civilian leadership may be even more crucially important than originally surmised, in that it both mediates and soothes civil–military disputes. Hence the army is bound to the state by praxiologically correct policies and strategies that defuse tensions and prevent the outbreak of upheavals that might otherwise have occurred. And secondly, the fact that the two common threads that run through most of these states – namely, astute leadership and economic growth – have not resulted in uniform levels of stability suggests that the quest for commonalities that act as 'causes' of stability may be a false trail. *The existence of alternate 'roads' to stability* may account for the wide socio-economic and political disparities of the data-set. The question therefore shifts to the kinds of stabilising strategies that have been pursued during the last 25–30 years by the leadership.

TOWARDS A THEORY OF CIVIL–MILITARY STABILITY

The previous comparative analysis underscored that while the 12 stable civilian régimes are disparate on a host of socio-economic and political factors, they are not a representative cross-section of all the 55 states in Africa. On at least two dimensions many of them differ sharply from the wider universe from which they are drawn: the astuteness of their leadership hierarchies, and the relatively consistent strides made in the economic domain. Are these sufficient conditions to confer stability?

The standard policies for achieving the military's subordination through either subjective or objective controls, to use the terminology of Samuel Huntington,[17] have not worked very well in Africa. Attempts to politicise, or civilianise, the armed forces by making them more of an

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[17] See, *inter alia*, Samuel Huntington, 'Civilian Control of the Military: a theoretical statement', in Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld, and Morris Janowitz (eds.), *Political Behavior: a reader in theory and research* (Glencoe, 1956), p. 380.

integral part of the life of the nation have been no more successful than efforts to 'militarise' or seal them off from society by inculcating a greater sense of professionalism and *esprit du corps*. Ingraining into soldiers the value of servile obedience to civilian authority and non-interference in the political domain, so that, in the words of Nyerere, 'they become no more of a risk than say, the civil service',[18] still evades most African leaders. The complexity of the intertwined nexus of power and the near-universal softness of administrative and political hier-archies, as well as widespread absence of legitimacy and support in much of the continent, all assure that few of the 'constraints' listed by Claude Welch, for example,[19] are heuristically of value.

A majority of African armies have been significantly upgraded since independence as regards the quality of their manpower. In many countries officer-cadets today are generally better-educated and drawn from more modern strata, and metropolitan staff-training colleges have become even more meticulous in underscoring the paramountcy of the political order. Yet the incidence of coups and military conspiracies has not abated in Africa. Striking is the fact that in Kenya it was the modern, well-educated, and highly trained Air Force that in 1982 mounted a coup against the legitimate centre of power its members had been trained to respect and obey.

Nor, for that matter, does whatever allegedly goes into making a 'People's Army' make this necessarily different from the more traditionally organised military, at least in terms of internal volatility and/or inclinations to rebel against civilian authority, because the greater nationalism and dedication to sacramental values is often fictitious. In Guinea-Bissau it was Africa's prime 'People's Army' that toppled the founding fathers of a hitherto much-lauded régime, and the *coup d'état* revealed no fewer ethnic, separatist, and personalist/ idiosyncratic motivations than those prevalent in bourgeois countries. The superior quality, greater intellectual capabilities, and sincerity of ideological dedication of the leadership in Guinea-Bissau, and the thoroughness with which it had indoctrinated society, stood head and shoulders above all other Marxist ex-lusophone régimes to emerge in Africa – and yet, it was precisely in Bissau that indoctrination proved a totally inadequate bulwark against military intervention.

Nor for that matter has the Tanzanian army been less restless after

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[18] As cited in Colin Legum, 'Why Tanganyika Accepted a Chinese Mission', in *Africa Report* (New Brunswick), 9, 9, October 1964, p. 16.

[19] Claude E. Welch, Jr. (ed.), *Civilian Control of the Military: theory and cases from developing countries* (Albany, 1976), pp. 5–6.

its meticulous politicisation and re-training following its 1964 'pay-strike'. Other mutinies and military plots have erupted from within the thoroughly purged and politically 're-educated' armed forces. Indeed, though Nyerere was able to stabilise Tanzania, it is doubtful if his 'populist' policies, many of which were highly unpopular,[20] played a significant rôle in this process.

Mozambique also merits attention in this context, having allegedly developed a cohesive nationalist military force during the lengthy struggle for liberation, and being viewed in some circles as the paragon of Marxist sincerity. In reality, of course, the often unruly and undisciplined Mozambican forces all along retained their original ethnic/regional cleavages, pro forma exploited their base-zones by extracting illegal payments from farmers and passers-by, and were commanded by many inept and certainly non-Marxist officers who retained their 'bourgois' tendencies after independence, to become a major drag on the fledgling Republic's attempt to establish effective mass-élite relationships.

Following outbreaks of armed unruliness in December 1975, Samora Machel instituted a purge of 'anti-social' elements that removed as many as 25 army leaders and 1,000 troops. The remaining 350 officers and 5,000 troops were compelled to undergo weekly 12-hour 're-education' sessions that included studies in Marxism and auto-criticism. Yet even after such a lengthy and cumbersome politicisation, an attempted putsch was mounted by some 460 troops and officers, thereby triggering in turn further purges (with strong ethnic overtones) and re-education drives.

In reality, the unrest in the defence and security forces was simply not being addressed, due to the ideological blinkers of the régime. The following basic grudges could not be uprooted through politicisation: low pay, poor terms of service, ethnic tensions and charges of favouritism, inadequate military facilities and materials, unpopular developmental tasks, no home leave, and inept and brutal commanding officers. These complaints did not disappear, and to a certain extent plague the Mozambican army to this very day, despite progressive increases in pay-scales and the slow improvement of the quality of the officer corps. The major-command shuffles at the head of the armed forces in 1984 attested to the fact that personal loyalty to the Presidency

[20] Nyerere's decision, for example, enacted consequent to Chinese advice, of having every military unit grow part of its foodstuffs needs on extensive plots adjacent to military bases, and undertaking development-related duties for the state (primarily for the Department of Public Works) was extremely unpopular, and caused considerable grumbling in several military units.

remained the prime criteria for promotion, not professional merit (or, for that matter, ideological rigour).[21] Indeed, it was *such* appointments to key operational posts, including the return of retired officers personally loyal to Machel, that did more to restrain unruliness than the 'proletarianisation' of the army through political re-education.

STRATEGIES OF CONTROL

Seven concrete control strategies have been pursued by the 12 stable states in their drive to subordinate the military to civilian authority.

1. The preferential recruitment into the armed forces, especially its officer corps and/or specialised units, of members of ethnic, regional, and/or religious groups considered to be supportive of the régime. Although the creation of 'ethnic armies' has at times been highly destabilising elsewhere in Africa, the consistent policy of keeping out of the military intrinsically disloyal or suspect groups can powerfully stabilise the political hierarchy in that it produces a reinforcing 'ethnic matching of regime and army'.[22] In essence a continuation of similar colonial patterns of recruitment, though the targeted groups may now be different, such policies are systematically pursued by many régimes in Africa and elsewhere, civilian as well as military, leading often to 'ethnic armies'.

A good example of this policy arises from the fact that the Kamba overwhelmingly officered Kenya's army at independence. Kenyatta moved as a matter of priority to change this ethnic imbalance having already been faced in 1964 by a military mutiny over pay-related issues. Of course, creating an overwhelmingly Kikuyu army was obviously impossible in a country where that ethnic group was a 21 per cent minority, and where the Kamba, Kalenjin, and others had historically sought military careers. But strongly infusing the officer corps and staffing key control units with Kikuyu was certainly feasible, especially in an expanding army where recruitment from all groups could clearly be seen as also progressing. J. Murray summed up the essence of the strategic thinking and assumption behind the decision in Nairobi:

a move by the army as a whole would call for a degree of trust and cooperation between Kikuyu and non-Kikuyu officers beyond what now seems to exist. A move by Kikuyu officers alone would probably bring a reaction from non-Kikuyu in the lower ranks, while intervention by non-Kikuyu officers alone

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[21] See 'Mozambique: politicising the ranks', in *Africa Confidential* (London), 15 February 1984, p. 5.   [22] Goldsworthy, in Baynham (ed.), op. cit. p. 98.

could be expected to bring a counter-move by the General Service Unit and other elements of the police under Kikuyu control.[23]

The key 'balancer' in this ethnic see-saw was the highly mobile, well-trained heavily-armed élitist General Service Unit (G.S.U.) – 'a political force, the regime's coercive arm against its internal enemies'.[24] Targeted for rapid transformation into a virtually all-Kikuyu hit-squad, with its base at Gatundu, close to the President's estate, there could be little doubt about the function of the G.S.U., that was in any case clearly spelt out.

2. The erection of élite armed and/or control structures in order to monitor any plotting, and to provide a totally loyal counterweight against a possible assault from the regular army, police, or airforce. Such presidential guards, general service units, paramilitary structures, intelligence-gathering units, informal networks of political spies, etcetera, have often been set up even when the armed forces appear to be supportive of the country's civilian leaders, and certainly when their ethnic-regional colourations are significantly dissimilar.

As with ethnically-skewed armed forces, so with competitive armed-control structures and political-spy networks, destabilising strains may be set loose. The existence of better-equipped and oftentimes better-paid praetorian guards frequently trigger internal military jealousies that may themselves be the prime motivation for a *coup d'état*, as Kwame Nkrumah and Modibo Keita (just to name two) discovered to their peril in Ghana and Mali, respectively. However, it is here that the leadership variable again enters the equation. If properly rationalised and executed, and without simultaneously diminishing the corporate status of the regular armed forces, this strategy may well result in greater civilian control and military stability.

During the Kenyatta era, despite its superior firepower, mobility, status, and prestige, the G.S.U. was not by and large regarded as a corporate competitor by the regular armed services and police. Their interests were not neglected, and although some friction and envy did develop, the G.S.U.'s prime task of protecting the President was viewed as legitimate. Of note is the fact that the G.S.U. promptly went into action to suppress the Air Force's attempted coup in Nairobi in August 1982, while many military units prevaricated in chosing sides until the outcome was clear.

In like manner in Gabon, Omar Bongo set up his élite presidential guard of ethnic Bateke kinsmen, equipped with ultra-modern light

[23] J. Murray, 'Succession Prospects in Kenya', in *Africa Report*, November 1968, p. 7.

[24] Mordechai Tamarkin, 'The Roots of Political Stability in Kenya', in *African Affairs*, 77, 308, July 1978, p. 301.

weaponry, as a counterweight to the restless and unreliable Fang-dominated army, and hence not surprisingly assessed as 'considerably more capable'.[25] Indeed, the paramilitary forces in Gabon, selectively recruited on an ethnic basis, number more than the regular army itself, and their officers are personally screened by Bongo himself. The high cost of maintaining parallel military hierarchies to watch each other is reflected to some extent by the fact that Gabon's defence budget is 80 per cent higher than Senegal's, despite the latter's armed forces being three times as large.[26]

At times the nature of the personnel intake of such support/control units may make them virtual ethnic mercenaries – as with the hand-selected all-Tuareg praetorian guard of the Djerma-dominated régime of Hamani Diori in Niger, or the narrow locality-specified (from one-quarter of *one* small village, Pya) recruitment drives for General Gnassingbe Eyadéma's presidential bodyguard in Togo.

3. Another technique of control is the appointment, in so far as may be possible, of members of the Head of State's direct family to key command posts in the senior officer corps (ideally, as chief-of-staff), military intelligence, republican guard, police, and paramilitary structures. Aided by the reports of political spies, this strategy allows a President to keep his fingers on the pulse of the armed forces as well as his hands on their operational control. In many respects, such efforts are an extension of the privatisation of state power – social, economic, political, and military – implicit in one way or another in the 'personal rule' modality of governance in Africa.[27]

Ian Khama's entry and progressive promotion to ultimate command of the Botswana Defence Force (B.D.F.) is a case in point. In this specific instance, however, the sources of the régime's stability were not rooted in Sir Seretse Khama's extension of a personal control network in the armed forces via his son's military career, that actually reached its peak after the President's death. But Ian Khama's entry into the B.D.F. was certainly predicated on the assumption that a personal hand on the paramilitary reins might avert possible problems.

In Gabon, many of the President's relatives, including some through marriage, were likewise appointed to key police/intelligence posts as

[25] Walter L. Barrows, 'Changing Military Capabilities in Black Africa', in William J. Foltz and Henry S. Bienen (eds.), *Arms and the African: military influences on Africa's international relations* (New Haven and London, 1985), p. 106.

[26] Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1983/4* (London, 1985), p. 25.

[27] The seminal thrust of this important concept is found in Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: prince, autocrat, prophet, tyrant* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1982). For a further elaboration on this concept, see Samuel Decalo, *Private Governments in Africa: the privatization of power and the state* (forthcoming).

surrogate controllers, though the break-up of Bongo's marriage in the 1980s shattered these alliances. Kenneth Kaunda's recent attempt to promote his son (despite the latter's mediocrity) to senior rank in the Zambian army, is another example of the awareness in civilian circles of the importance of personal control of the armed forces.

This strategy is also widely employed elsewhere in Africa. In Niger, trusted cousins of Seyni Kountché were placed in charge of both the armed forces and the praetorian guard, a fact that resulted after the President's death in a 'dynastic' succession when one of them succeeded him. In Equatorial Guinea, Macias Nguema's bloody tyranny in Malabo was sustained throughout its lengthy interregum by an incredible military *mafioso* of cousins, nephews, uncles, and relatives by marriage, which – when alienated through the murder of one of its own – brought the replacement (and execution) of the demented dictator by his nephew, the prime executioner of the régime, Theodoro Mbasogo.[28]

4. Another policy espoused in some of the stable civilian régimes is the recruitment/retention of expatriates in the officer corps. They have usually been appointed to head the control structures that monitor the loyalty of the armed forces, or to serve as buffers against them in military intelligence or a presidential guard. Though also potentially destabilising, having a disinterested 'foreigner' in a sensitive post may actually be preferable to risking an antagonistic faction controlling and using this to discredit or purge the rest.[29] And, from the perspective of civilian leaders, expatriate officers are ideal 'neutral technocrats' at the service of the Presidency. They can be relied upon to remain loyal to their paymaster, and to remain above factional manoeuvrings for positions in the army while ferreting out plots and helping to neutralise them.

In the Central African Republic, the régime's second most powerful man is said to be the French officer in charge of intelligence, who has extraordinarily wide executive powers, being referred to in urban areas as 'President Kolingba's President'. In Niger, a similarly influential expatriate was responsible for overseeing the armed forces during much of Diori's civilian reign.

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[28] See 'Francisco Macias Nguema: tyrant of Equatorial Guinea', in Decalo, *Psychoses of Power*, pp. 31–76.

[29] During 1966–9 in Dahomey, for example, the Directorship of the Security Services (Intelligence) changed hands *six* times, as each incumbent (later demoted or disciplined) utilised the post to promote his personal professional advancement, and to discredit other officers and/or competitive cliques. See Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa*, p. 62, fn. 45.

Gabon offers the best example of this strategy from the 12 case-studies. One mainstay of Bongo's control over his relatively restless and intrinsically unreliable armed forces has been the appointment of a number of virtual mercenaries. Hired at extremely high salaries and generous fringe benefits, as ultra-conservative as the President to whom they are personally accountable, and commonly referred to in Libreville as Bongo's 'Corsican Mafia' (though most are from Provence), these expatriates have helped to stabilise relations between the régime and the armed forces, to refine tactics for political campaigns in France,[30] and even to organise an occasional military sortie abroad, including the unsuccessful mercenary assault on Cotonou airport in 1977.

5. A number of civilian régimes in francophone Africa possess virtual guarantees of external military support in case of a domestic upheaval or politically motivated invasion. France underwrites their stability through enduring treaties of military co-operation signed at independence and modified over the years. These guarantees are given added teeth by the knowledge that allies in difficulties have been rescued in the past,[31] helped logistically by the fact that French troops, weapons, and a few jet aircraft are stationed in bases in some of these countries. These *in situ* units are part of a rapid-deployment force based in southern France, capable of arriving in sufficient strength at any trouble-spot in Africa within 48 hours in order to fulfil their military commitments.

Among the stable civilian régimes, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Senegal have such mutual-defence treaties with France, and in these 'core Francophone states', according to Robin Luckham, 'things were not permitted to degenerate to the point where...intervention was needed'.[32] Symbolic of the degree of 'military co-operation' involved, there is evidence that the armed forces of, for example, Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon seldom go out on manoeuvres that involve either large numbers of troops or live ammunition, unless accompanied by French military detachments stationed in those countries.

6. Moving from external assistance to fundamental sources of internal stability, a number of régimes have attained a measure of

[30] President Bongo's political campaigns in France have included massive uranium export-funded contributions to the election coffers of the Presidential candidate deemed to be most pro-Gabonese, as well as to radio stations, commentators, and legislators that can sway public opinion or votes in the National Assembly.

[31] See Anthony Clayton, 'Foreign Intervention in Africa', in Baynham (ed.), op. cit. pp. 203–58.

[32] Robin Luckham, 'French Militarism in Africa', in *Review of African Political Economy* (Sheffield), 24, May–August 1982, p. 70.

systemic legitimacy that effectively insulates their civilian hierarchies from praetorian assaults. Clearly a government widely considered by most strata of society as 'legitimate' is likely to be so similarly regarded by the armed forces. And if, for whatever reason, this feeling is not pervasive in some military quarters, awareness that the civilian leaders have wide popular acclaim and support in the countryside is likely to deter those who might dream of grabbing power. Moreover, if corporate or individual grievances do develop in the armed forces, these are more likely to be openly presented for mediation, rather than leading to plotting and rebellion. And if despite all this a coup is attempted, the presence of committed loyalist units will promptly contain the damage and block the planned takeover.

It has always been difficult to assess the legitimacy of civilian hierarchies in countries without competitive political elections. The yawning gap between rhetoric and reality that characterises so many African phenomena, results in gross misjudgements when régimes 'recognised' as being fairly legitimised are suddenly revealed to have feet of clay in the aftermath of a successful coup.

Civilian rulers may stabilise their administrations by legitimised traditional, modern, and/or anti-colonial credentials, by judiciously balancing regional/ethnic pulls, piling up solid economic attainments, satisfying the needs of various groups, assuring a measure of political accountability, and in general providing 'good government', though not necessarily by recognised western democratic standards. As John Dunn points out, 'Good government is, of course, to be interpreted not in terms of the intentions of the rulers...but rather in terms of the consequences of their rule for those over whom they rule',[33] and the political framework within which these stabilising actions occur may be relatively oppressive, as in Malawi. Astute leadership (that obviously entails astute policies) may be the key factor in securing legitimacy for civilian régimes neither inherently democratic nor particularly institutionalised.

A number of civilian régimes appear to have secured a widespread legitimacy through a combination of some of the above-mentioned strategies, including Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mauritius, Senegal, and Tanzania. Legitimacy in Africa, however, must be constantly nurtured against a myriad of socio-economic counter-forces that daily act to erode the gains made in the struggle to achieve this much-elusive goal.

[33] John Dunn, 'The Politics of Representation and Good Government in Post-Colonial Africa', in Patrick Chabal (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa: reflections on the limits of power* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 161.

But since few if any African régimes have succeeded in completely removing the threat of military intervention, the study of stability cannot be confined to the legitimation of civil administrations.[34] Other control strategies, such as some of those already enumerated, may individually or in unique combinations, be pursued to restrain any tendencies by armed forces for self-aggrandisement within partly legitimated civilian régimes.

7. Providing officers with salaries that are either relatively or objectively high, as well as material and fringe benefits, supernumerary positions, etcetera, is another well-known strategy for 'buying' the loyalty of armed forces, and especially their leaders. This helps to unite the corporate and individual pecuniary self-interests of the military to those in the régime's hierarchy, deflects the emergence of political ambitions among the officers, and binds the support of the armed forces to the survival and stability of civilian rule.

Buying the instrumental allegiance of military officers and troops through pecuniary rewards may be seen as an extension of the quite 'normal' spread of patronage to influential civilians by political power-brokers. As Goldsworthy reminds us, 'soldiers are among the players – actual and potential – of the political game',[35] and civil–military stability may well rest on a clear-cut understanding that 'reciprocity...could be called into play whereby army officers might agree not to intervene as long as certain "rewards" were forthcoming from the civilian sector'.[36]

In most African states, civil or military, army officers play a major economic rôle in the commercial sector. However, such personal enterprises have usually been developed in contravention of existing legislation, even though the régime may turn a blind eye. As a stabilising technique one is referring to *legally-sanctioned* activities of officers who, in effect, either draw two state salaries (when they occupy supervisory or supernumerary posts), or are occupied with their private concerns while drawing full military pay. In Kenya, for example, civil servants are actually enjoined to become active entrepreneurs; indeed, during Kenyatta's Presidency most officers above the rank of major acquired large farms and estates at rock-bottom prices, and many also

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[34] By way of contrast, Goldsworthy, 'Civilian Control of the Military in Black Africa', p. 56, asserts that it 'must in the first instance be grounded on questions about the legitimacy and effectiveness of civilian institutions'.

[35] Goldsworthy, in Baynham (ed.), op. cit. p. 106.

[36] Thomas S. Cox, *Civil–Military Relations in Sierra Leone: a case study of African soldiers in politics* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1976), p. 19.

developed trading enterprises. After the succession that brought Moi to power, these 'benefits' were extended ethnically, leading one observer to comment on how Moi 'has made a point of keeping officer ranks well cared for'.[37]

MODALITIES OF CIVIL–MILITARY STABILITY

In assessing the particular 'mix' of the variables that help to explain the existence of civil–military stability in the 12 states now being analysed, it becomes clear that there are multiple sources of stability in Africa. The 12 have few socio-economic similarities because they comprise an artificial amalgamation of countries differentially stabii-ised by distinctly different combinations of factors and policies. For this reason all attempts to 'explain' their stability that rest on structural theories are bound to be imperfect approximations of reality. Three generic modalities can be perceived in civilian-ruled Africa, each stemming from specific stabilising conditions, albeit found in a number of régimes. The common threads that bind the states in each grouping do not run across all three. Highly system-unique, and affected by individual leadership quality and style, régimes cannot easily 'mimic' a modality to attain civil–military stability, though one of them does allow greater scope for adaptation in different contexts.

1. *The External Guarantor Modality*

In the first profile of stability, it is the existence of external guarantees of prompt military assistance in case of a domestic upheaval that really inhibits civil–military turbulence. Though at times improvised *ex post facto* armed support has been given by other foreign governments, France is the sole power with *a priori* military commitments, and a credible *in situ* deterrent military presence in Africa.

By its very nature such a modality of stability is likely to be the most efficacious, since so long as such an external prop is both assured and given credence locally, internal military conspiracies are utterly foolhardy since any gains will be axiomatically reversed by superior external force of arms. As one despondent Gabonese officer rhetorically explained to the author, 'What is the point of speculating about change in Libreville if the very next day the RIAOM will be landing at Mba

TABLE 7

Modalities of Stable Civil–Military Relations

External Guarantor Modality	Legitimised Modality	Trade-Off Modality
Cameroon	Botswana	Kenya
Côte d'Ivoire	The Gambia	Zambia
Gabon	Malawi	
Senegal	Mauritius	
	Swaziland	
	Tanzania	

Note: Djibouti would have been placed in the first group, Cape Verde and Zimbabwe in the second, and Sierra Leone in the third, if they had fulfilled the criteria of longevity of civilian rule.

airport?'[38] And as Clayton concludes, 'There is no doubt that the garrisons of Senegal...and Ivory Coast...have by their presence contributed to the political stability of these two states.'[39]

The guarantees are in the form of bilateral defence agreements appended to 12 of the treaties of military co-operation signed at independence between France and the 23 francophone states. Eight retain full-fledged mutual-defence treaties with France: Cameroon (signed February 1974), the Central African Republic (August 1960), the Comoros (October 1978), Côte d'Ivoire (April 1961), Djibouti (June 1977), Gabon (August 1974 and 1985), Senegal (March 1974), and Togo (July 1963). Thus, four of the 12 stable civilian régimes in Africa, comprising what one scholar has referred to as 'France's core neo-colonies',[40] benefit from the ongoing French commitment to maintain both their internal and external security, as does all stable francophone Africa.

This commitment acquires operational credibility because of the military 'facilities' maintained by France adjacent to the main international airports of Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Senegal, it being reported in 1985 that one *batallion d'infantrie de marine* was stationed in each country.[41] Depending primarily upon the level of conflict in

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[38] Interview in Libreville, 12 August 1988.
[39] Clayton, in Baynham (ed.), op. cit. p. 212. See also 'France: intervention capability', in *Africa Confidential*, 1 January 1981.
[40] Luckham, loc. cit. See also the scathing analysis by Guy Martin, 'The Historical, Economic, and Political Bases of France's African Policy', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 23, 2, June 1985, pp. 189–208.
[41] See Jacques Guillemin, 'L'Importance des bases dans la politique militaire de la France en

Chad, France now maintains between 8,000 and 10,000 troops (down from 21,300 in 1964) in six bases in Africa (down from 100 in 1960), and has the capacity to airlift from France 4,000 more within 48 hours to any point on the continent. Normally a small-scale show of strength is enough to deter any indigenous military power-gambit. For example, Paris recently ordered the dispatch of 250 troops and a few jets from its Libreville base to Lomé, thereby 'reminding' restless elements in the Togolese military of the still-binding nature of the French-Togolese treaty.

These prepositioned forces are supplemented by military advisers that are to be found in various tactical, professional, and intelligence posts, in 1985 ranging in number from 34 in the highly professional Senegalese army, to 74 in Côte d'Ivoire, 84 in Cameroon, and 122 in Gabon.[42] Because Ahidjo had opted not to allow any foreign base to be established in Cameroon, French personnel are integrated in a variety of posts in the military, or attached to the large French embassy. Their effectiveness is possibly attested by the fact that the conspiracy that led to the April 1984 uprising of the presidential guard (triggered by Ahidjo's desire for a comeback via his ethnic kinsmen) had been thoroughly penetrated by French intelligence, thereby enabling it to be crushed by Cameroon's own armed forces who supported President Biya.

There is widespread awareness in all quarters, civil and military, that Paris will not allow the fall of the civilian régimes in Abidjan, Dakar, Libreville, and Yaoundé – or, for that matter, a few others, including strategically important Djibouti. Whether theoretically binding pledges of military aid will actually be honoured is obviously an open question, because despite an array of presumed 'guarantees' a few leaders have been jettisoned by France, including Abbé Fulbert Youlou (Congo), Sylvanus Olympio (Togo), Hamani Diori (Niger), and David Dacko

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Afrique noire francophone et à Madagascar', in *Revue française d'études politiques africaines/Le Mois en Afrique* (Dakar and Paris), August–September 1981, pp. 32–44; John Chipman, *French Military Policy and African Security* (London, 1985), Adelphi Papers No. 210; and Paul Chaigneau, *La Politique militaire de la France en Afrique* (Paris, 1984). For an analysis of action taken, see Daniel Bon and Karen Mingst, 'French Intervention in Africa: dependency or decolonization', in *Africa Today* (Denver), 27, 2, 1980, pp. 5–20, and Jacques Guillemin, 'L'Intervention extérieure dans la politique militaire de la France en Afrique noir francophone et à Madagascar', in *Revue française d'études politiques africaines*, June–July 1981, pp. 43–58.

[42] Gabon has the third-highest number of French military advisers in the 26 states in which France maintains such missions, below only Morocco with 183, and Chad with 125. For some important data on the structural reorganisation of the Gabonese military, see Moshe Ammi-Oz, 'L'Évolution de la place et du rôle des forces publiques africaines', in *Le Mois en Afrique*, March 1977, pp. 59–78. For fairly up-to-date details on the francophone African armies, see Pierre Viaud and Jacques de Lestapis, *Afrique: les souverainetés en armes* (Paris, 1987).

(C.A.R.). Consequently, régimes that possess treaties of military co-operation with France regard them as invokable only as a last resort, and do not act with the arrogance that self-assurance might endow. And those that feel their value to Paris is diminishing, or that their credentials are becoming tarnished in French eyes, assiduously attempt to develop alternate sources of civil–military stability.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, this stability has been attained through a measure of popular legitimacy that surrounds the internationally much-acclaimed régime, through the dispensation of economic largesse to the officer corps, and through the secondment of expatriates to sensitive posts in the security apparatus. These factors have bound the military to the *persona* of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, which is why the succession question in Côte d'Ivoire is central to any final assessment of its stability.

In Senegal, a number of post-independence developments have helped to legitimise civilian supremacy, now solidly anchored in the perpetuation of the highly stabilising alliances forged by Senghor with the country's powerful *mourides*. To some extent also, Abdou Diouf's multi-party democracy tends to allow for systemic safety valves, though the constant political conflict that has occurred since its adoption has begun to produce destabilising influences. These factors have further subordinated to civilian authority an historically disciplined and remarkably professional army, despite the slow escalation of socio-economic problems, a rise in political volatility, and separatist sentiments in Casamance and elsewhere.

Gabon too has developed supplemental sources of maintaining its rather fragile stability. In particular, the armed forces are controlled by the superimposition of a veritable expatriate/mercenary, monitoring/controlling vice, replete with both operational capability and an array of political spies. The régime has acted harshly in instances when mutiny and plots have come to light, and has been criticised for its human-rights record by Amnesty International and other external bodies.[43]

Finally, in Cameroon, despite the decision not to retain a highly visible French presence, as well as progressive restlessness as the weaknesses of Biya's régime are revealed, the adoption of many of the traits of the 'trade-off' modality suggests that the military's support has been actively bought through economic perks and advantages.

[43] See, *inter alia*, 'Unfair Trial and Other Amnesty International Concerns in the Republic of Gabon', London, 1984.

France's military commitment to a stable civil–military balance in these four states has diverse motivations, but should be seen against the background of her large ongoing presence and economic interests, as well as the conception of her 'own national destiny... being intimately tied to that of Africa'.[44] This is her second most important export market after the European Community, and it is guaranteed. This is the sole global region with which France consistently records a trade surplus, being the main supplier of a range of mineral ores from uranium through phosphates to iron. Moreover, one-third of France's energy imports (18 million tons of crude oil) come from the continent. In 1988, despite several years of economic slowdown that saw a major erosion in the French presence, there were still 100 French industrial, commercial, and service multinationals in Africa, with over 1,500 local affiliates, 800 small or medium-scale enterprises, and some 5,000 single family or individual entrepreneurs. There were also some 300,000 French nationals throughout francophone Africa, an important presence whose interests need to be sustained.[45]

Senegal has pride of place as France's 'first colony' in Africa, a fact that has garnered Dakar much sentimental attachment, thereby more than compensating for the country's lack of economic importance beyond serving as a conveniently-near tourist playground for the French middle-class, and as a productive outlet for French petty entrepreneurs. The fact that Senegal was headed for two decades by Léopold Sédar Senghor – the best living testimonial to the alleged cross-cultural transferability of French values – further sealed the 'historic bond' between the two countries, strengthening the metropole's resolve to preserve, militarily if necessary, the political tranquillity of Senegal.

In somewhat similar manner, powerful personal links of amity were forged between Charles de Gaulle and Félix Houphouët-Boigny, that *mutatis mutandis* were converted into durable bonds between all French Presidents and the Ivoirien statesman. France's commitment to the stability of the civilian throne in Abidjan is possibly the firmest and most unequivocal of all its residual obligations in Africa. In the words of one senior French diplomat, France's commitment to the integrity of

[44] George E. Moose, 'French Military Policy in Africa', in Foltz and Bienen (eds.), op. cit. p. 60. See also Tamar Golan, 'A Certain Mystery. How Can France Do Everything that it Does in Africa – and Get Away with It?', in *African Affairs*, 80, 318, January 1981, pp. 3–11, and Louis de Guiringaud, 'La Politique africaine de la France', in *Politique étrangère* (Paris), June 1982.

[45] 'La Coopération avec l'Afrique: perspectives pour les enterprises françaises', in *Afrique contemporaine* (Paris), 149, 1, 1989, p. 45.

the political order in Abidjan 'is immutable'.[46] Or, as Chipman puts it, 'So long as Houphouët-Boigny remains in power in the Ivory Coast, he can be sure of the protection afforded by French troops'.[47] The fact that Abidjan has unequivocally opened its doors to French petty entrepreneurs and has seen eye to eye with Paris on most regional and global issues, has added further dimensions to this alliance. Moreover, Côte d'Ivoire's rapid economic development made her a valuable trading partner – likewise Cameroon, albeit to a lesser extent, where the French retain some of their plantations.

Despite existing military treaties and Gabon's much weightier economic rôle, Libreville is militarily sustained by an occasionally reluctant Paris ill at ease with Bongo's arch-conservative metropolitan political allies, heavy-handed domestic authoritarian style, and his family's economic peccadillos. These include the President's personal vagaries and idiosyncracies, the embarrassing indiscretions and outright larcenies by his former wayward and profligate wife, and the corruption of some of his most trusted lieutenants and/or relatives. Reference has already been made to Bongo's interventions in the French political arena – even against Mitterrand's own candidacy – as well as his own quasi-mercenary 'Corsican Mafia'. However, the benefits of continued access and indirect control of the immense and strategically important mineral riches beneath Gabon's topsoil apparently more than compensate for the embarrassments stemming from France's support of Bongo's civilian rule.[48]

2. *The Trade-Off Modality*

This modality rests on a tacit but very visible trade-off of material benefits, both to the military as a corporate body and to officers as individuals, in exchange for political fealty. The quest for an alliance with the armed forces is not unlike the patron-client networks that political leaders establish with influential civilians in both the traditional and modern sectors. Stability thus becomes a direct function of the satisfaction of group and individual needs of the armed forces, and they become yet another important constituency that has to be 'taken care of' through the spoils of office.

Corporate trade-offs may include the provision of often unnecessarily sophisticated equipment and firepower that enhances the prestige of the military, and an ever increasingly large army that, *inter alia*, raises

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[46] Interview in Abidjan, 12 July 1988.   [47] Chipman, op. cit. p. 30.
[48] For some details, see Pierre Péan, *Affaires africaines* (Paris, 1983).

the status of its leaders, as well as the number of officers needed, all with prestige and remunerative repercussions, etcetera. Individual perks include not only rank and pay promotions, duty-free cars and other luxury imports, but also appointments overseas as military attachés, as well as places on refresher training-courses in prized foreign staff-colleges. Other seducements may include the allocation of sinecures, through secondment to the parastatal sector; integration into the political hierarchy, as in Gabon in 1969 when three officers joined the Cabinet; or legislation allowing officers to engage in private commercial enterprises while on active service. As with the previous modality, other stabilising strategies may well be adopted, but ultimately the glue binding military élites to civilian authority is pecuniary self-interest.

Kenya and Zambia have forged a measure of stability in such a manner. Military officers in both countries are at times virtual economic potentates. To a greater or lesser extent they are engaged in large-scale cash-crop farming on lands secured at give-away prices and at low interest rates, in lucrative smuggling activities, and in trade and commerce, especially trucking.

In Zambia, Kaunda has given officers a privileged position in society, and they have reciprocated by protecting their class interests and their patron against the few conspiracies from below. Officers are relatively well-paid, allocated superior housing, and receive ample fringe-benefits. A number of the most senior have either been made Ministers and/or been given remunerative parastatal appointments. Army units have considerable responsibility for running certain divisions of the administration, notably the Mechanical Services Branch, a fact that confers upon them not only an enhanced developmental rôle but also sources of petty pilferage. The Zambian 'approach' meshes well, moreover, with Kaunda's generally mercan-tilist inclination to the political game. As one observer reported:

Kaunda neutralises his opponents by finding them government or party jobs, rather than by facing grievances and problems face on...never rely[ing] on massive repression. One result is that the party is now bloated with full-time functionaries drawing salaries from government coffers, many of them without clear job descriptions.[49]

Kenya, with a more developed economy, allows fuller amplification of this strategy. Civil servants are officially encouraged to enter the private sector, despite conflicts of duty and other negative implications reported in the Ndogwa Commission of Inquiry, and most military

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[49] 'Zambia: party problems', in *Africa Confidential*, 21 January 1987.

officers have an array of lucrative enterprises. It is no mere chance that every retired Chief-of-Staff is comfortably ensconced in a large farm, including the Kamba General implicated in the amateurish 1971 plot, who owns 9,400 acres at Machakos partly as a result of the Government's 'gratuity' and partly purchased at fire-sale prices in a land-hungry region.

Kenyatta utilised such policies quite liberally during his lengthy tenure. On his accession to the political throne, the new President expanded the custom of buying military support by encouraging farming and commercial activities, even turning a blind eye to some that were actually illegal. Many more grants of land were made by Moi: not only to his fellow Kalenjin, but also to senior Kikuyu to assure them of the continuation under his aegis of state munificence, as well as to other traditionally anti-Kikuyu elements in the officer corps previously bypassed in the allocation of benefits, in an effort to build a broader ethnic alliance. And shaken by the first Rawlings-led *coup d'état* in Ghana, and by the wave of executions of public figures in Accra that traumatised many other complacent African leaders as well, soon 'land grants in Kenya went to junior officers as well. Large areas around Nakuru and Ngong were handed out to keep the armed forces behind the government.'[50]

Through such policies military officers have been deflected from attempts at economic aggrandisement via coupmanship with all the latter's hazards and uncertainties. They are personally bound to the régime by their legitimate integration in the allocation of patronage and largesse, as opposed to their counterparts elsewhere who have to develop their private interests surreptitiously. Their personal loyalty, and the full weight they exercise over the units they command, is assured by virtue of the threat to their own economic status that would suffer in any political upheaval from any quarter.

3. *The Legitimised Modality*

The third modality of civilian supremacy is visible in polities that have been able to develop a measure of systemic legitimacy that serves to discourage praetorian assaults from their armed forces. Alternative strategies are pursued simultaneously, but ultimately the stability of the régime rests on the widespread acknowledgement that it is only right and proper for the civilian hierarchy to continue to rule the country.

[50] Tamarkin, loc. cit. p. 301. See also 'Kenya: the end of an illusion', in *Race and Class* (London), 24, 3, Winter 1983, p. 238.

The legitimised modality is the ideal source of stability in that it attests to the internalisation within the armed forces of the concept of civilian supremacy.

Although systemic legitimacy has no constraining features or negative implications and/or side-effects, and is both cost-effective and in theory transferable following a political succession, this cannot be taken for granted. In Africa systemic legitimacy still competes with, or is none too securely superimposed upon, group allegiances stemming from cultural sub-nationalism, regionalism, at times sectarianism, all linked to volatile and ambitious personalities. Power and legitimacy still have to be assumed as *a priori* linked to the *persona* of a ruler, and not necessarily the automatic stabilising heritage of a successor. Colin Legum has aptly noted that 'All African regimes are essentially temporary, or transitional, since with very few exceptions they do not operate within an established framework of viable and widely based institutions, even when they have been legitimatized'.[51] Those few that do operate within an imperfectly institutionalised setting may be found in the legitimised modality of civil–military stability, including Botswana, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritius, Swaziland, and Tanzania.[52]

The legitimacy that underlies this modality may be lodged in a variety of cumulative factors. It may stem, for example, from the absence of competing sub-nationalisms in fundamentally compact single-ethnic polities (or approximations thereof), coupled with astute leadership buttressed by traditional and/or modern credentials (Botswana, Swaziland). Alternately, consequent to the dynamism, dedication, or charisma of leaders who, despite their society's more fractured nature and/or other socio-economic strains, have succeeded to glue potentially destabilising cleavages (The Gambia, Malawi, Tanzania). Or, from the permeation in society of cultural values steeped in the give-and-take of democratic life, that by definition shift politics from the status of a zero-sum game, defusing tensions and competitions (Mauritius).

Botswana, The Gambia, and Mauritius are further sustained by their competitive multi-party democratic political life, while Malawi,

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[51] Colin Legum, 'Fission and Fusion in Evolving Nation-States', in his *Africa in the 1980s*, p. 25.

[52] Criticisms of President Banda's harsh idiosyncratic rule notwithstanding, there is little doubt that his régime is thoroughly legitimised in Malawi. For more details, see Samuel Decalo, 'Malawi: dictatorship by consent', in *The Stable Minority*, and Robert B. Boeder, 'Prospects for Political Stability in Malawi', in Calvin Woodward (ed.), *On the Razor's Edge: prospects for political stability in Southern Africa* (Pretoria, 1986), pp. 23–7.

Swaziland, Tanzania (as well as Botswana) have had their political order legitimised by the force of the personality of their founding fathers (Kamuzu Banda, King Sobhuza II, Julius Nyerere, Seretse Khama). All these variables insulate the existing (in four instances, second-generation) civilian order against the possible usurpationist tendencies of their armed forces. Military personnel with corporate and/or individual grievances or ambitions are undoubtedly to be found in all states. But the active manifestation of such inclinations will be tightly repressed in light of the popularly legitimised political leadership that possesses a multiplicity of loyalist sources of retaliation against praetorian assaults.

Still, as with the previous two modalities of stability, the legitimacy of civilian rule is buttressed by an array of policies aimed at maintaining the support of the military. Even in Botswana, where civilian supremacy is strongly ingrained, presidential restraints over the Botswana Defence Force were exerted through the presence in the officer corps of Seretse Khama's son. In Swaziland, the spread of economic patronage to influential families in society keeps their kith and kin in the army reasonably happy. In Tanzania, although a concerted drive was mounted after the 1964 mutiny to eradicate the army's élitism, including a massive programme of re-education, much of the military's relative quiescence since then has been gained by tactics not unlike some of those adopted by Zambia: namely, by integrating key officers into the parastatal sector, by awarding dramatic increases in scales of pay, by granting the armed forces greater social status, and by monitoring them through paramilitary hierarchies.

CONCLUSIONS

A survey of the political, socio-economic, and intra-military characteristics of 12 stable civilian systems in Africa reveals that as a group they are quite heterogeneous. Only on two dimensions – quality of civilian leadership and patterns of economic growth – are most, but still not all, intrinsically different from neighbouring states with chronic histories of coups and military rule. Moreover, Botswana notably apart, none have been completely free from intra-military tensions and/or civil–military confrontations. What needs to be emphasised is that the stable régimes have surmounted obstacles that have seriously tripped up their neighbours, at least in part through the quality of their leadership, and the specific strategies adopted to deflect any military aggrandisement tendencies. However, neither the leaders of these states

nor their policies have as yet been given their due, and they have attracted little attention in cross-national studies of stability and instability in Africa.

Seven specific factors and control mechanisms have played a rôle in assuring the civilian subordination of the military in the 12 régimes that have been analysed. Although no single policy, or any combination, can account for the stability attained in all, three sub-groupings suggest themselves: (i) régimes that are stabilised by the deterrent implicit in treaties of military co-operation and mutual defence with a credible external power: (ii) régimes that symbiotically integrated their armed forces, especially their officers, in the distribution of the spoils of political office; and (iii) régimes that have so legitimised their leadership hierarchy that this both attracts obedience and loyalty, as well as deters power gambits.

Only by separating the 12 civilian régimes into these three modalities do the sources of civil–military stability in Africa clearly stand out, as opposed to attempts to discover statistically-meaningful structural and socio-economic determinants. And since some of the variables and strategies outlined above have the obvious capacity to confer stability to *any* power-wielder, they have deep relevance to the study of military régimes as well.